

Entrepreneurship Awards Honour Young Atlantic Canadians

Department of Education

News Releases

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A former rickshaw runner has captured top honours at Atlantic Canada's first Planet Entrepreneur awards.

Jake MacKinnon, owner of Roadrunner Rickshaw Services in Halifax, N.S., received awards as the Young Entrepreneur of the Year and YES student entrepreneur of the year at a conference on Friday, May 5. Mr. MacKinnon, 22, is a full-time commerce student at Saint Mary's University in Halifax.

"Congratulations to Jake MacKinnon and all Planet Entrepreneur Award recipients and nominees for their inspiring work," said Chris Curtis, chief entrepreneurship officer for the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, the awarding body. "They provide a snapshot of the dynamic entrepreneurial environment that's being created by our young people in Atlantic Canada."

The Planet Entrepreneur awards attracted more than 100 nominations; the 22 finalists were announced last week. Nine awards in total were presented during the ceremony, which was taking place Halifax's World Trade and Convention Centre on Friday night, part of The Spirit of Entrepreneurship 2000 conference. More than 700 delegates and guests were expected to attend the ceremony.

The Young Entrepreneur of the Year in Atlantic Canada award was presented by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to Mr. MacKinnon for demonstrating entrepreneurial practices in many of the award categories. Mr. MacKinnon also received the highest award in the Youth Entrepreneurship Skills Program (YES) as top student entrepreneur in Nova Scotia Economic Development's summer youth entrepreneurship employment program.

The Student Entrepreneur of the Year Award, sponsored by Atlantic Progress Publishing Ltd., went to 18-year-old Matthew Holleman, owner of Holleman's Heritage Woodworking, in Grafton, N.S. Now a student of architectural technology in Charlottetown, P.E.I., Mr. Holleman has been developing his woodworking talent for years. At age 13, he built a one-room log cabin. In Grade 9, he crafted a screen door and custom orders have flooded in since. He won gold in the Nova Scotia Skills Competition in carpentry and has had job offers from master carpenters. Mr. Holleman keeps 15-hour days during the summers as he makes doors, tables, stools, cradles and other custom orders.

George Donovan, president and CEO of GameAgents Corp. of Moncton,

N.B., received the award for Entrepreneurship and Technology sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada. Under Mr. Donovan's leadership, GameAgents act as consultants for IT companies seeking international exposure. The company is also working toward becoming the gatekeeper of the hottest computer game development talent in the technology field.

Matt Haliburton, an Entrepreneurship 12 teacher at Shelburne Regional High School in Southwest Nova Scotia, was awarded Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year, which was sponsored by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Mr. Haliburton's enthusiastic assistance, constructive feedback and positive reinforcement have encouraged many student entrepreneurs, and he maintains contact with them after they graduate and become entrepreneurs. He volunteers in the community and also organizes an annual regional trade fair in the high school gym during Small Business Week.

The Service Excellence Award, sponsored by Royal Bank Financial Group, was awarded to Justin Miles from Newfoundland and Jonathan Moules of Shelburne, N.S.

At 16, Justin Miles owns JP Computers in St. Teresa's, Nfld. Justin, a Grade 11 honour student at St. Joseph's High School, has been operating a retail computer business for more than two years. He installs, upgrades and provides after-hours service and trouble-shooting for his clients, which saves them trips to Stephenville or Corner Brook.

Jonathan Moules, owner of Jonathan's Lawn Care, has three staff and close to 100 customers in a 140-kilometre radius of his hometown in Shelburne. The Grade 12 student at Shelburne Regional High School has been in business since the age of 11. In 1997, he tapped into his savings to buy an oceanfront house, and he plans to attend community college to take small engine repair and landscaping. Good customer service ensures the steady growth of his seasonal business.

The Innovation Award, sponsored by the Canadian Intellectual Properties Office of Industry Canada, went to New Brunswick's, Chris and Nancy Mathis, owners of Mathis Instruments in Fredericton. Their scientific and entrepreneurial expertise has gained TCProbe worldwide attention in the aerospace, automotive, medical appliances, electronics, and food process and textile industries. The probe non-destructively tests for flaws in insulation, foams, glass, pastes and ceramics.

The New Media, Film and the Arts award, sponsored by CBC-TV, went to Patrick Doyle, president of OPTICALLY Artistic VIDEO Ltd., in Halifax, N.S. Among other exciting challenges, Mr. Doyle and his camera have searched for a lost fleet in the Arctic, sweated with fitness gurus in Barbados and followed Cape Bretoners to Newfoundland as they celebrated the millennium.

The Supporter of Young Entrepreneurs Award, sponsored by Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, was awarded to Tanya Shaw Weeks of Dartmouth, N.S. Still a young entrepreneur herself, as president and CEO of both Unique Patterns Design Ltd. and Virtually Yours Inc., Ms. Weeks serves on a number of entrepreneurship committees. She acts as a funding provider, program planner, speaker and mentor in the entrepreneurial youth community.

The Planet Entrepreneur Awards is the largest event at the Spirit of Entrepreneurship 2000 Conference. The conference began on Tuesday, May 2, and finishes on Saturday, May 6, at a trade show presented by more than 20 creative young entrepreneurs from across Atlantic Canada. The trade show will be held at Mic Mac Mall in Dartmouth. It begins at 9 a.m. and the public is invited to attend. Trade show awards will be presented at 1:30 p.m. in the mall.

Complete profiles on the award recipients and finalists can be viewed on the Internet at www.planetentrepreneur.com.

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